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Les Aspin Still Feels Soviet May Send Army Into Poland

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 1 — The chairman of the House intelligence oversight subcommittee said today that the odds favored Soviet military intervention in Poland after the middle of this month.

In a report based on his survey of information available on Soviet moves around Poland, Representative Les Aspin, Democrat of Wisconsin, said American intelligence apparently misjudged the state of the Russians' preparedness when it concluded early last month that they had completed steps for an intervention.

"The most widely accepted interpretation holds that Moscow has been prepared militarily to invade since early December," Mr. Aspin said. "But there is strong evidence that Moscow is not yet prepared, either militarily or politically."

He said the Carter Administration, basing its statements on the conclusion of intelligence services, "grossly exaggerated the state of readiness of the Red Army" in early December.

Mr. Aspin said that, according to his information, the Soviet training preparations, involving 400,000 to 500,000 troops in six armies around Poland, will not be completed before mid-January.

'Window' for Invasion Defined

The window during which the invasion can be launched stretches only from

roughly mid-January to late March," he said. Then, he said, the terrain turns to mud, and Soviet reservists called up in December would be due to go home.

"Will the Russians invade?" Mr. Aspin asked. "There is no definitive word: the Kremlin probably has yet to make up its own mind. Once the political and military preparations are in place, the decision can be made in less than 72 hours before the borders of Poland are crossed."

"But the odds certainly lean toward an invasion," he said, citing three reasons.

One is bureaucratic momentum. He said that "a great deal of time, effort and money is being expended on preparations, which have a way of taking on a life of their own." And on no other occasion has the Soviet Union "failed to use the mobilized forces at their command after such massive preparations," he said.

The second reason, he said, is the need to cripple the free trade union, which, he said, is threatening Communist control in Poland. The third reason, he said, is the desire of some party rivals to oust the leadership of Stanislaw Kania.

View of Intelligence Agencies

Administration officials said intelligence agencies as a whole continued to believe that the Soviet forces had completed their preparations and were just "fine-tuning" them as they awaited a possible decision to enter Poland.

But some analysts, the officials said, agree with Mr. Aspin that the current maneuvers may represent further preparations rather than "fine-tuning."

The White House, starting on Dec. 3, began to express alarm publicly about the possibility of an invasion. On Dec. 7, the White House announced that it believed the Russians had completed preparations for an intervention.

As a result, some State Department officials have since expressed the view that the Russians, by not invading in early December, may have postponed a decision or in fact decided not to do so.

Mr. Aspin said, "Contrary to the impression given in most news stories, the Kremlin is still getting its ducks in line."

He said that politically, the Russians had not yet launched a full propaganda campaign: "telling the world how bad are the conditions the Red Army is planning to cure," and this would not occur until military preparations were concluded.

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